

# WARD NEWS

Ward 4 - Councilmember Stark

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651.266.8640



May/June 2008

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## Saint Paul City Council's Ward 4 E-Newsletter Volume 4, May/June 2008

### What's inside:

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### The Light Rail Project

The legislature has approved \$70 million in bonding for the Central Corridor Light Rail Project, allowing the planning to move forward. It appears the alignment through the University of Minnesota may be settled once and for all. The Saint Paul City Council, Ramsey County, and our counterparts in Minneapolis and Ramsey County are being presented with a package of materials regarding the engineering work that has been on the project to date for "Municipal Consent." These materials are in a technical, difficult to read format at this point, but include plans for station locations, street cross-sections, and more. We are holding a public hearing on the municipal consent package this Wednesday at 5:30 in City Council Chambers. My office continues to work with the business community, City staff, Met Council, district councils, University UNITED and other partners to address the serious issue of concern related to the loss of on-street parking on University Avenue.

Another issue of concern to me is the quality of the design of the stations. Those of you familiar with the Hiawatha Light Rail line know that each station is different, with a local public artist having played a role in the design with community input. The current proposal for Central Corridor is to have all of the stations be essentially the same basic design, with a public art component that would be an addition to that basic design. Given that the stations are the primary "face" of the project, I believe it would be a lost opportunity to settle for a very basic station design that does not reflect the best features of the character of the surrounding community.

### More on Transportation

Thanks to great work on the part of City Staff, the Union Park Community Council, and Transit for Livable Communities, we will be moving forward in 2009 with a project to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety on Marshall Avenue between Cretin and the river. The project will include an east-bound bicycle lane, medians, a new sidewalk on the north side of the street (adjacent to Town and Country), and signs encourage bicycle to take full use of the right lane heading down the hill (westbound).

We continue to hear from concerned citizens about the need to improve pedestrian safety, calm traffic, and the need to make it easier for seniors, people with limited mobility, and pedestrian and cyclists in general to get around in the winter (snow removal). Our goal is to work with District Councils, Saint Paul Smart Trips (formerly St. Paul TMO), the Minnesota Safety Council, Ramsey County/St. Paul Public Health, Transit for Livable Communities, and others to bring some attention to the issue of pedestrian and bicyclist safety this summer. Please let us know you're thoughts and creative ideas for getting the word out. We would then work with the Police Department to increase enforcement of the law.

Ramsey County and MNDOT will be funding a study later this summer to take a second look at congestion and traffic issues on Snelling between Selby and the Fairgrounds. The opportunity to improve the Snelling bridges over Pierce Butler Route and the railroad tracks for bicyclist and pedestrian safety is an attractive one. For me, the study raises concerns

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about the prospect of some extraordinary traffic "solution" that would solve one problem (throughput of motor vehicles) only to create others. I encourage you to get involved.

## Rock-Tenn

June 30 is the tentative deadline for the Port Authority to distribute its draft report and recommendations, which will be heavily influenced by the Rock-Tenn Community Advisory Panel's recommendations. Tentatively planned is a public comment period that begins in early July and ends early August. During September sometime, District Councils will review the recommendations and they will come to the City Council later in the fall.

Some of the City Council offices were presented with an interesting opportunity when a flier containing misinformation was distributed door-to-door in some Ward 4 neighborhoods. The flier said that the City Council would be voting on June 1 whether or not to burn garbage as a fuel source at Rock-Tenn. While my office received more calls than usual, it meant that Samantha & Darlyne were able to talk to people individually, clarify the process, and direct residents to correct information sources.

Thanks for reading, and please keep in touch.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russ Stark".

## Be in the know:

- Libraries closed for maintenance
  - Hamline Midway – August 11 through Friday August 15.
  - St. Anthony Park – August 25 through August 29.
  - Merriam Park – September 29 through October 10.
- The Minnesota Minute Project: a video contest to highlight the natural resources of MN  
<http://bellmuseum.org/blog/?p=6>  
The project hopes to celebrate 150 years of Minnesota history and to ask how we can protect and restore these special places for the next 150 years.
- **Central Corridor Municipal Consent Public Hearings**

As required by state law, local governments will hold public comment hearings May 29 through June 17 on schematic drawings for the Central Corridor LRT Project before they take formal action on them in July. The hearings won't revisit decisions that were made earlier, such as the number of stations, and no actions will be taken at these hearings. Decisions regarding issues such as public art, station design and streetscape will be the focus of future meetings. The public will be able to ask questions and get answers informally from project staff at open houses one hour before each public comment hearing where staff will present the same brief overview.

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- **June 3, 1:30p.m.** - City of Minneapolis, City Council chambers, Room 317 City Hall, 350 S. 5th St., Minneapolis. Open house at 12:30 p.m.
- **June 4, 5:30p.m.** - City of St. Paul, City Hall Council Chambers, 15 W. Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul. Open house at 4:30 p.m.
- **June 5, 5 p.m.** - Ramsey County, Lao Family Center, 320 W. University Ave. St. Paul. Open house at 4 p.m.
- **June 17, 1:30 p.m.** - Hennepin County, Hennepin County Government Center A-2400, 300 S. 6th St., Minneapolis. Open house in Room A-2350 at 12:30 p.m.